

PANEOLOGY



By Sean McQuaid

TAKE A DEEP BREATH, FOLKS, AS we embark on a quirky quest into what's current and coming in the continuum of comicdom, with some short notes on a variety of projects, some of which may receive full-length reviews at a later date. First up, a medium-sized review of a book that was mailed to our office as an advance preview copy....

Wild Angels #1

(four issue limited series) Writer- Nick Vince; Artist- Pino Rinaldi

Okay, here's the scoop. This is a four-issue limited series from Marvel UK (the British division of Marvel Comics, which is currently trying to expand into the North American market). Its premise is a team-up between two of Marvel UK's recurring characters: Wild Thing and Dark Angel. The former is a virtual reality (VR) junkie from a possible near-future of our Earth, wherein her exceptional abilities to function within and control VR environments lead to her being recruited by the police as a special VR agent, in return for cancelling the prison sentence she herself faced for illegal VR use. In this era, VR is like a potentially dangerous drug, and Nikki (Wild Thing) Doyle is an addict who puts her VR skills to use for the law in exchange for her freedom and her electronic high.

Dark Angel, on the other hand, is a far less distinctive individual, at least to judge by the first issue of this series, where she comes across as an immensely powerful superheroine type with a variety of mechanical

attachments and no sense of humour. She flies, she zaps stuff, she busts an illegal genetics lab and in the process meets and aids some weird, winged, ram-headed monster (huh?). The only interesting tidbit about her that occurs off the top of my head is the fact that she was originally called Hell's Angel, but the motorcycle gang by that name sued Marvel and forced them to modify her monicker. Truth really is stranger than fiction.

The connection between the two characters is the creature Dark Angel rescues in 1994...Wild Thing scraps with it (or its double) in her era of 2020. This will no doubt be expanded upon so as to somehow bring the two characters together, but it's not exactly very intriguing. Dark Angel, particularly, strikes me as boring so far. Wild Thing is much more interesting both in terms of content and characterization. Hard to say much about the writing yet, since the plot is going who-knows-where, but the scenes with Wild Thing and her supporting cast are capably dialogued, with a humourous sensibility. Highly praised newcomer Pino Rinaldi handles the art chores adequately. He has an okay sense of layout and design, and a good sense of anatomy and facial expression. **Wild Angels #1** as a whole shows some promise, but nothing really exciting yet.

ODDS & ENDS:

Eclipso (Ongoing series): Soon to be cancelled, the progressively bloodier Eclipso title is largely for fans of gore-- the horrific splatter, not the U.S. Vice-President. **Eclipso's** title character is

one of comicdom's most fearsome villains, and the book showcases sophisticated black humour and horror overtones, as well as an epic cast-- the myriad heroic forces arrayed against Eclipso; however, the book is just too wantonly violent to be a comfortable read, particularly in the wake of **Eclipso #13**, wherein a host of DC characters (including Commander Steel, Major Victory, Peacemaker, Manhunter III, Dr. Midnight, Wildcat II, and even the venerable Creeper) were brutally slain in a gruesome monument to shock value. The book's better qualities drown in a pool of blood.

Justice League America

(Ongoing series): Sophomoric and cloying on both the writing and visual fronts, **JLA** has a good cast but continues to misuse the characters in what has been a creative stagnancy since Dan Jurgens' excellent "Destiny's Hand" storyline wrapped up. More naturalism in both the pencilling and the dialogue would make this rather bland concoction a bit easier to swallow, and some cast variations might not hurt either.

New Titans (Ongoing series): Marv Wolfman has been spinning his wheels ever since the "Titans Hunt" storyline ended many moons ago. The book has been devoid of direction or purpose, and to make matters worse the sublime penciller Tom Grummet was replaced by the unendurable scrawlings of Bill Jaaska. There's some good characters in

this book and some good writing, but Wolfman is falling into his old trap of years past-- too much angst going nowhere and getting old very fast.

Outsiders (Ongoing series): the team that started out years ago as little more than a pack of sidekicks to Batman is back, this time sans the pointy-eared vigilante. Returning in the premiere issue were Geo-Force, Halo, Katana, and Looker, joined by new allies Faust, Technocrat, and Wylde. The whole lot of them are framed for mass murder by a vampire lord who usurps the

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